

May 13, 2016

Dear House Criminal Justice Committee Members,

We, the undersigned, are pleased to support HB 5649 and HB 5650 and its efforts to reduce drug overdose deaths in Michigan. These important bills will save the lives of hundreds of Michiganders each year.

Of particular concern is the growing number of deaths as a result of opioid overdose. Opioids were involved in 28,647 American deaths in 2014 and opioid overdoses have quadrupled since 2000. Michigan is one of only 14 states with a statistically significant increase in the rate of opioid overdose deaths from 2013 to 2014. (The most recent year for which the CDC has data available.)ⁱ

- Overdose is now the leading cause of injury-related deaths in Michigan.ⁱⁱ Most of these overdose deaths are due to opioids.ⁱⁱⁱ
- If help arrives in time, opioid overdoses can be safely and quickly reversed with an intranasal or intramuscular dose of naloxone.
- Most overdoses occur in the presence of other people, usually other drug users.^{iv}
- Research confirms that fear of police response was the most commonly cited reason for not calling or delaying before calling 911.^v

We are pleased to see Michigan consider joining the twenty states that have enacted similar policies. It is important to note that these laws are not designed to protect people from arrest for other offenses, such as selling or trafficking drugs or driving while drugged. These laws are intended give people a second chance and hopefully an opportunity to seek the help they need.

We are eager to assist taking prompt action around these critically important bills, and to share our views as they are introduced. We look forward to working together to achieve passage of this legislation that will save many lives.

Thank you,

National Association of Social Workers - Michigan Chapter
Michigan Association of Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselors
Dawn Farm Treatment Center
Recovery, Education, Advocacy, & Leadership Michigan
Regional Anti Drug Education and Outreach

Alliance of Coalition of Healthy Communities
Unite to Face Addiction - Michigan
Mi-Hope
Livonia Save Our Youth Coalition
Washtenaw Recovery Action Project
Bryan's Hope

ⁱ Rose A. Rudd, Noah Aleshire, Jon E. Zibbell, R. Matthew Gladden. Increases in Drug and Opioid Overdose Deaths - United States, 2000-2014 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, 2016;64:1378-1382.

ⁱⁱ Michigan Resident Death Files, Division of Vital Records and Health Statistics, Michigan Department of Health and Human Services.

ⁱⁱⁱ A Profile of Drug Overdose Deaths Using the Michigan Automated Prescription System (MAPS), Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. 2014

^{iv} Coffin PO, Sullivan SD. Cost-Effectiveness of Distributing Naloxone to Heroin Users for Lay Overdose Reversal. Ann Intern Med. 2013;158:1-9.

^v Tracy M, Piper TM, Ompad D, et al. Circumstances of witnessed drug overdose in New York City: implications for intervention. Drug Alcohol Depend. 2005;79(2):181-190.